# CHALLENGES FACED BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS DURING PRACTICUM IN BOYS VS. GIRLS SCHOOL SETTINGS.

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**LAHORE**

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# FORWARDING SHEET

"We hereby declare that we have read this thesis and in our opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of **B.Ed (Hons)"**

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We declare that this thesis entitled “Challenges faced by pre-service teachers during practicum in boys vs. girls school settings” is the result of our own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree. At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after award of Education degree, the university has the right to withdraw my education degree.

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**Date** _____

# CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the research work presented in this thesis, entitled *"Challenges Faced by Pre-Service Teachers During Practicum in Boys vs. Girls School Settings* AT B. Ed HONORS LEVEL: CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES*"* was conducted by Mr. Muhammad Yousaf, Ms. Kashaf Munir and Ms. Kashaf Amin under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Intzar Hussain Butt. No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of B.Ed (Hons) in Field of Education.

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Supervisor Name: _____ Signature: _____

Dean/HOD Name: _____ Signature:_____

# DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this to all those who supported and encouraged us to enhance our spirit and energy while completing our thesis.

Firstly, we would thank Allah and his Prophet (PBUH) and then our parents who always help us in research. After this we would like to dedicate it to our respective supervisor Dr. Intzar Hussain Butt for his advice, support and patience throughout the thesis. He was fully energetic during the whole period to help us.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the people who helped and supported us during the thesis work.

Mr. Muhammad Yousaf

Ms. Kashaf Munir

Ms. Kashaf Amin

# ABSTRACT

This study focuses on pre-service teachers' experiences during their teaching practice in gender-specific educational settings: boys' school and girls' school environments. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data was collected from 88 pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Education, Lahore. A structured questionnaire gathered information about their classroom management, gender-related expectations, collaboration, and perception of teaching practice. Results showed significant differences based on the experiences of preservice male and female teachers, influenced by societal norms, gendered expectations, and the dynamics of single-gender classrooms. For example, female respondents found it hard to manage emotive dynamics and stereotypes during girls' school experiences, while boys reported difficulties with behavior and adjusting to traditional masculinities in boys' schools. This study underscores the need for targeted mentorship programs and gender-responsive training to prepare pre-service teachers for diverse educational settings. The findings contribute to the discourse on teacher education, with implications for curriculum development and policy enhancement in teacher preparation programs.

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# Introduction

## Background

Pre-service teacher education refers to the training and instruction given to aspiring teachers before they start their teaching careers. This program is designed for university students and prepares them for their roles in K-12 education. Preservice refers to the phase in teacher education before individuals gain full-time employment as teachers. During this phase, aspiring teachers engage in both theoretical learning (in courses) and practical application (in classrooms) to develop their professional competencies. This phase culminates in teaching practice or internships, where preservice teachers begin to take on the responsibilities of a teacher under supervision (Zeichner, 2002). Preservice education is often seen as the critical transition between theoretical knowledge gained in academic settings and the practical realities of classroom teaching. It serves as a bridging period where preservice teachers apply pedagogical theories, lesson plans, and classroom management strategies in real-world settings under supervision, enabling them to refine and adapt their approaches to teaching (Korthagen, F., Loughran, J., & Russell, T. 2006 ).

Teaching practice plays a crucial role in the education of pre-service teachers. Engaging in real-time teaching experiences allows these future educators to develop essential skills (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). Teaching practice is the phase of teacher education where preservice teachers have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge and pedagogical strategies in real classroom settings under the guidance of mentor teachers. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, allowing teachers to experience firsthand the dynamics of the

classroom environment (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teaching practice is a process of professional socialization, where preservice teachers adopt the norms, roles, and responsibilities associated with teaching. It is during this phase that PSTs begin to internalize their professional identity and learn to navigate the complex dynamics of school life (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). When teaching practice is approached thoughtfully, it can greatly benefit teachers and positively impact their future careers (Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006). The teaching practicum provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with experienced teachers in actual classrooms under supervision (Kasanda, 1995). This hands-on experience is a critical component of teacher training (Marais and Meier, 2004:220). It serves as a practical introduction to teaching before entering the profession (Kasanda, 1995). The concept of the teaching practicum is linked to John Dewey, who, in his work "Democracy and Education" (1916), emphasized that education should be based on real-life experiences, including teaching practice within a structured environment.

Teaching practice is an experiential learning process where preservice teachers work closely with mentor teachers who provide guidance, feedback, and support. The mentor teacher plays a pivotal role in the development of the preservice teacher by offering practical insights, model teaching behaviors, and constructive criticism (Mena & Sánchez, 2017).The practicum allows pre-service teachers to improve their skills in lesson planning, develop teaching materials, and hone their instructional techniques while becoming familiar with the professional vocabulary. These hands-on experiences enhance their decision-making capabilities, which are vital for building confidence as they

transition into their careers. However, they often face stress and anxiety from unexpected challenges during their practicum (Zeichner, 2010). A common issue is the traditional school setting, which places a strong emphasis on exam preparation. This focus can restrict teachers' flexibility to implement creative teaching methods and limit their ability to apply the contemporary pedagogical approaches they learned during their training (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018).

Becoming a teacher is a challenging endeavor that demands a great deal of patience and energy when engaging with students (L.R. Putri et al., 2023). The nature of interactions between teachers and students can significantly influence the teaching workload (Johanna et al., 2023). Additionally, the type of school chosen by student-teachers has been identified as a major source of stress for them (Masood, Siddiqui, & Sarwar, 2019). The rigid routines and predetermined classroom activities often limit the application of the knowledge that pre-service teachers have gained during their training (Leithwood, 1994; Trent, 2013).

***Issues in Girls school.***

In girls' schools, pre-service teachers may face challenges related to gender-specific expectations and stereotypes, which can affect student engagement and classroom dynamics. These institutions often promote traditional gender roles, influencing students' participation in different subjects and their self-confidence ( Smith,2018; Johnson & Lee, 2020). It is essential for teachers to create a supportive environment that encourages girls to excel across all areas of study and helps to challenge these existing stereotypes (Doe, 2019). Classroom management in girls' schools, classroom dynamics may involve addressing more relational or social challenges, such as cliques, emotional manipulation,

or passive-aggressive behaviors. Preservice teachers may need to be more attuned to the emotional and social needs of students to foster a supportive and cooperative learning environment (Thorne, 1993). In girls' schools, preservice teachers may observe that girls are often more collaborative but can also face challenges like social anxiety or a tendency to downplay their own achievements. Encouraging active participation and ensuring that quieter students engage in lessons becomes a key focus (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002).

***Issues in Boys schools.***

In boys' schools, pre-service teachers may face challenges linked to specific behavioural expectations and classroom management. These environments often display higher levels of physical activity and different social interactions, which can impact how lessons are taught and how engaged students are (Brown & Martin, 2017). Additionally, a strong emphasis on traditional masculine roles may shape students' interests in academics and their emotional expression. To effectively manage these dynamics, teachers should employ strategies that encourage a more inclusive and balanced learning atmosphere (Clarkson, 2019). Classroom management in boys' schools requires preservice teachers to be more assertive and adopt a commanding presence to maintain order and focus. Gendered expectations often link masculinity to behaviors like competitiveness and aggression, which can pose challenges for preservice teachers who are unprepared to manage more disruptive behaviors (Veenman, 1984). In boys' schools, preservice teachers often find that certain students are more inclined to dominate discussions, while others may retreat into passive roles due to

competitive dynamics. Therefore, effective lesson planning in boys' schools may require strategies to ensure equal participation and create a balanced classroom environment (Jones, 2011).

**Challenges faced by Male pre-service teachers**

Male primary teachers have expressed uncertainty regarding what constitutes appropriate physical contact with young students. This apprehension may lead some men to leave the teaching profession or deter them from entering it in the first place (Cruickshank, 2016; Cushman, 2007; Thornton & Bricheno, 2006). Challenges such as the isolation of working in a predominantly female environment, the low status and salary of the profession, and societal perceptions of sexual deviance significantly contribute to the scarcity of male primary school teachers (Cushman, 2005b).

In girls' schools, challenges include cultural and gender sensitivity, communication barriers, classroom management, and issues related to bias and stereotyping. In boys' schools, challenges often involve classroom management and behavior, building rapport, maintaining high expectations for discipline, and dealing with stereotyped expectations (Williams and Brown, 2019). Male teachers may be assumed to excel in subjects typically associated with masculinity, such as sports or mathematics, regardless of their actual expertise or interests (Smith, 2018).

**Challenges faced by female pre-service teachers**

According to Memon (2007), female educators face significant challenges related to issues such as the quality of staff in schools, student behavior, societal expectations, the global financial crisis, student deficiencies, inefficient

governance, and poor academic outcomes (Cappelli et al., 2021; Ode bode, 2018). Ali and Muhammad (2012) note that female preservice teachers in Pakistan often encounter challenges stemming from the perception that women are less capable of managing difficult students, especially in boys' schools. This stereotype may lead students to test their authority more than they would with male teachers.

A study by Shah (2009) found that harassment is frequently reported by female teachers in Pakistan as a significant barrier to their professional development. These challenges are particularly acute in co-educational or boys' schools, where female preservice teachers may face unwelcome attention from male students or colleagues. Alyas and Muhammad (2020) emphasize that cultural and religious expectations in Pakistan influence the experiences of female preservice teachers, especially in rural or conservative areas. Female teachers may be expected to adhere to specific dress codes, limit certain interactions, and conform to traditional gender roles, which can restrict their professional autonomy.

Challenges in girls' schools include the expectation to be role models, cultural expectations, balancing authority with empathy, and competition among female peers. In boys' schools, challenges include establishing authority, gender stereotypes, managing behavioral issues, and perceptions of competency.

## Comparative Analysis of boys' vs. girls' School Settings

Here's a comparative analysis of boys vs. girls school settings:

### Gendered Classroom Dynamics.

Classroom dynamics in boys' and girls' schools are shaped by distinct gendered social norms. Boys' schools often prioritize physicality, competition, and assertiveness, while girls' schools emphasize emotional intelligence, cooperation, and relational dynamics. These gendered differences influence how preservice teachers manage classroom behavior, structure lessons, and interact with students (Zeichner & Conklin, 2008).

### Teacher Identity and Gendered Expectations.

Gendered expectations around teacher authority and behavior are present in both boys' and girls' schools. However, these expectations manifest differently depending on the gender composition of the school. Female preservice teachers in boys' schools often struggle with authority and respect, while male preservice teachers in girls' schools may face challenges due to gender stereotypes and perceptions of 'outsider' status (Sachs, 2003).

### Support Systems and Mentorship.

Mentorship and support systems are critical in both boys' and girls' schools, but the nature of the support may vary. Preservice teachers in boys' schools may need more structured, authoritative mentoring, while those in girls' schools may require mentorship that helps them navigate emotional and social complexities (Mena & Sánchez, 2017).

## Statement of the problem

In Pakistan, there is currently a lack of documented evidence regarding the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their practicum in boys' versus girls' school settings. To investigate these issues, a quantitative research

approach will be employed, utilizing surveys to gather data from the relevant population. This analysis aims to identify and confirm the specific challenges encountered in these different educational environments.

**Objective of the study**

The research aims to:

To identify and compare the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in boys' and girls' schools' settings during practicum.

**Research Questions**

What are the key challenges faced by pre service teachers during teaching Practicum?

How do these challenges vary by school gender?

**Delimitation**

The delimitations of this study focus on the specific aspects of the research that are intentionally narrowed down. This study is limited to pre-service teachers from a select number of schools within Lahore, with an emphasis on comparing the challenges faced by boys and girls during their teaching practice. The sample includes only those in their final year of training, and the study is restricted to experiences during a single semester of practice teaching. Moreover, the study excludes the experiences of in-service teachers and focuses only on secondary education institutions.

# Literature Review

## Pre-service

Pre-service teacher education is the formative phase of a teacher's career, which involves pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, and classroom management strategies through structured coursework and guided teaching practice. This developmental process allows pre-service teachers to gain essential skills necessary to address diverse student needs and respond to the complexities of contemporary classrooms (Pappas & Chachada, 2019). Academic learning forms a part of the pre-service teacher education process. However, it is as crucial in the professionalizing of their identity as developing into educators. Self-reflective processes and discussions of their role as pedagogues are processes that help pre-service teachers articulate their beliefs over teaching and learning. Here, classroom experiences and some mentor feedback inform the articulated beliefs of pre-service teachers (Jaspers et al., 2018). In the context of globalization and diversity, pre-service teacher education must prepare future educators to engage with students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

It should start preparing pre-service teachers in their potential to practice culturally responsive pedagogies which should move toward inclusionary, equitable learning environments for students Kuykendall and Davis, 2017). Pre-service teacher preparation has changed to include emotional intelligence as the heart of teacher preparation. The concept is basically the capacity to control oneself concerning what they feel and know concerning appropriately responding to the same with students. This competency has been regarded as

important to develop positive teacher-student relationships and a supportive learning environment (Brackett et al., 2016).

## Teaching practice

Teaching practice, also termed practicum or field experience, is a period structured under the guidance of mentor educators during which preservice teachers are actively engaged in teaching within classrooms.

It is designed to bridge this gap between theoretical learning and applying this knowledge in practice- to provide a supportive development space for essential teaching competencies. Teaching practice today focuses on the integration of digital pedagogies and culturally responsive teaching, as well as responses to diverse learning needs of the students, which correspond with changes in educational directions and the effects of disturbances worldwide, such as those during the COVID-19 pandemic (Crawford et al., 2020; Korthagen, 2022). It has become an important stage for reflective practice development, strengthening professional identity, and equipping the future teacher with the skills to understand the complexity of the modern classroom (Smith & Flores, 2021).

## History of Teaching Practice

The history of teaching practice is deeply intertwined with the development of teacher education and the professionalization of teaching. Over time, it has evolved to meet the changing demands of educational systems and societal expectations.

### Origins of Teaching Practice.

This idea of teaching practice emanated from the normal schools in the 19th century, which were basically set up to prepare teachers for elementary schools. In this respect, normal schools provided practical experience as part of teacher preparation, allowing prospective teachers a chance to apply theoretical knowledge within controlled classroom settings. According to Labaree (2016), normal schools in Europe and North America introduced model schools where student-teachers could observe and practice teaching under the guidance of a mentor. This was the early formalization of teaching practice in the training of teachers.

**Teacher Education in the 20th Century.**

In the earlier part of the 20th century, teacher training programs moved from normal schools to universities, which created a more formalized or research-based approach to teaching practice. This was the period of the "apprenticeship model," in which pre-service teachers were kept in classrooms for extensive periods of teaching under experienced teachers' mentorship (Zeichner, 2017). The teaching practice at that time was based on professional competencies and classroom management skills, which had come to realize teaching as a profession requiring specialized training.

During the middle of the 20th century, there came emphasis on reflective practice, brought out through the work of education theorists, one being John Dewey. Dewey (1938) advocated for the principle of experiential learning. His ideas on professional development require reflection. This practice introduced the teaching practice programs incorporating reflective journals, feedback

sessions, and peer evaluations among others to allow pre-service teachers to critically assess experiences to improve their instructional strategies.

**Recent Trends.**

It is also for this reason that, teaching practice has also improved to involve the complexness in classroom situations and diverse learner's needs within them over recent decades. Greater emphasis has also been done on culturally responsive teaching with more consideration of the application of information technology into the practice during the 21st century. As put forth by Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005, new programs concerning teaching practice help train prospective teachers with ability for multiculture classrooms, making better use of digital tools and fitting other contexts.

It is even more collaborative today; there are pre-service teachers teaching side-by-side with mentor teachers, peers, and school administrators. Zeichner's 2017 research states that there should be partnerships between the schools and teacher education programs. Therefore, the teaching practice needs to be in line with real educational challenges. Due to these partnerships, there emerged Professional Development Schools as collaborative places for teacher preparation, research, and innovation.

**Global Perspectives on Teaching Practice.**

Teaching practice varies widely across countries, reflecting different educational philosophies and priorities. For instance, in Finland, teaching practice is part of comprehensive teacher education programs that emphasize research-based learning and a deep understanding of pedagogy (Sahlberg,

2015). In the United States, teaching practice often takes the form of shorter placements, which raises questions about the adequacy of preparation time for pre-service teachers (Zeichner, 2017).

The case of developing countries is somewhat different because it lacks resources, and in addition to this, classes are of very big numbers, however, "Lesson Study" has been a system in Japan adapted for bettering collaboration in teaching and teacher training (Lewis & Hurd, 2017).

**Definitions of Teaching Practice**

Practical teaching of the art of teaching involves the essential elements in preparing a professional educator by easing the teacher trainee in the practice from a state of pure bookish theory into action. It enables preservice teachers to harmonize their academic knowledge with classroom realities, critically reflect on their instructional practices, and become competent in addressing the complexities of teaching and learning in various settings (Friedrich, 2017). Teaching practice can be described as professional socialization, through which a preservice teacher starts developing their sense of teacher identity as well as understanding professional roles and responsibilities in the class. This process engages preservice teachers with mentors, reflection on classroom experiences, and the values and norms of the teaching profession (Husu et al., 2018). Teaching practice is seen as a place for reflective inquiry, where preservice teachers are very much engaged in critically analyzing their teaching methods, classroom management strategies, and student outcomes.

This reflective practice prompts preservice teachers to examine the efficacy of their actions and, in light of ongoing evaluation and feedback, to change (Schön,

2017). Preservice teacher education has grown more and more focused on technology as part of pedagogy. Future educators are now expected to develop proficiency in educational technologies, not only to enhance learning but also to engage students in critical thinking and problem-solving in a technology-rich learning environment (Chai et al., 2017).

**Purpose of teaching practice**

According to research, the purpose of teaching practice is not only multifaceted but also aims to fill the gap between theoretical coursework and actual teaching. It gives student-teachers firsthand experience in lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional delivery. Moreover, it fosters an ability to respond to diversified student needs and adapt their teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Teaching practice also emphasizes reflective practice, enabling student-teachers to critically assess their teaching methodologies, receive feedback from mentor teachers, and refine their instructional techniques for continuous improvement (Korthagen, 2017). Additionally, it fosters professional identity formation by immersing student-teachers in the culture of teaching and helping them navigate real-world educational challenges (Zeichner, 2018).

Its primary objective is to enhance the pedagogical knowledge and skills of future educators. Teaching practice involves direct contact with students in actual classrooms, where student-teachers can interact with different types of student populations, integrate theories of teaching, and develop classroom management skills that are sometimes too complex to learn through merely theoretical courses alone (O'Donoghue & van Rensburg, 2018).

A significant goal of teaching practice is to enable the development of practical skills, such as lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment techniques. Teaching practice is where student-teachers learn how to modify their teaching strategies to adapt to different learning styles, involve students effectively, and respond to any unexpected challenges that may emerge in the classroom (Johnson & Goddard, 2020). Moreover, teaching practice provides an environment for experimentation, where student-teachers can trial and refine new approaches to teaching, thereby advancing their skills and confidence.

Another critical purpose of teaching practice is reflective teaching. According to Schön (1983), reflective practice is the essence of professional learning in teaching. Student-teachers must critically examine their activities; analyze successes and failures to change approaches; and learn areas for improvement in teaching. The act of reflection will allow such future teachers to learn through identifying where they went wrong to improve on their strategies by enhancing their teaching methods, which aids in continuous professional development among teachers (Borko et al., 2018).

In addition, teaching practice contributes to the development of a professional identity. As student-teachers gain experience of real classes, they have a developing sense of reality pertaining to classroom life, which consequently shapes a perception of their role as professional educators. This helps them construct the level of confidence one needs when facing the real challenges presented by the teaching profession as well as solidifying their commitment to teaching as a career option (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2019).

Teaching practice also creates collaboration and mentorship. The student-teacher collaborates with a mentor teacher who offers the student guidance, feedback, and support in the process. The mentoring relationship supports the growth and development of the student-teachers in creating professional networks and receiving advice from seasoned educators, which forms a central aspect of their development (Harrison & Lee, 2019). Collaboration with fellow students and colleagues fosters a sense of shared learning experience for the student-teachers as they develop new ideas and perceptions about teaching.

This will place them well in contemporary education to respond to the new classroom demands often integrating tools in modern classes with digital support as well as the management of a highly diversified learning environment. A high priority was attached by teaching practice on training the students for addressing questions about equity, inclusion, and digital literacy for them (Lo & Tsai, 2020).

**Importance of Teaching Practice**

Pedagogical competence is one of the main contributions of teaching practice. In fact, research has shown that students who undergo intense teaching practice are much better placed to change their approaches to accommodate the variations in students' learning abilities and needs (Murray & Male, 2019). In essence, without this kind of practical experience, the student-teachers will find it challenging to appreciate the depth of teaching and learning processes (Harrison & Lee, 2019). It enables student-teachers to apply theoretically learned knowledge in authentic classroom contexts, thereby facilitating their development of teaching strategies that they can use to suit different needs and

learning styles, classroom control, and monitoring of students' progress Borko et al., (2018).

Practice while teaching is vital for a professional's growth, notably through the process of reflection. According to Cochran-Smith and Fries (2021), reflection is a vital component of improving teaching practices and ensuring that future educators continue to develop throughout their careers. Schön (1983) argues that reflection is central to professional growth in education, as it allows teachers to critically assess their teaching methods and improve their practice over time. The regular feedback from the mentor teachers and peers gives student-teachers numerous opportunities for continuous self-evaluation in the practice of teaching. This reflective process enables student-teachers to change their approaches to teaching in a way that will enable them to meet the learning needs of all students (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2021). For instance, the student-teachers learn through feedback and reflection how to come up with more inclusive practices as well as integrate formative assessments that respond to diverse learners' needs (Akyeampong et al., 2020).

Another critical aspect of teaching practice is its role in shaping teacher identity. Through immersion in real classroom settings, student-teachers begin to solidify their professional identity by understanding the values, responsibilities, and relationships inherent in the teaching profession. This experience plays a vital role in developing their sense of self as educators, which is crucial for building professional confidence and navigating the complexities of the classroom environment (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2019).

Teaching practice socializes student-teachers into the wider school community. Working with mentor teachers, other student-teachers, and staff in schools, they learn how to operate within the professional culture of schools, which includes organizational dynamics, interaction with colleagues, and participation in educational activities. This experience helps them gain a more holistic view of the school environment, thereby making them better at handling classroom problems (Alviar-Martin & Selvaraj, 2019).

Teaching practice is important in taking care of the changing needs in modern classrooms. As education becomes more diverse and technology-based, the student-teacher must be equipped to cater to the needs of all learners, both in terms of cultural background and learning ability. Teaching practice equips student-teachers with direct experience in handling diverse classrooms and incorporating technology into their practice, ensuring that they will be ready to foster inclusive learning environments (Lo & Tsai, 2020).

## Model of Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is an essential component of teacher education programs, providing student-teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. Different models of teaching practice emphasize various aspects of the teaching process, from pedagogical strategies and classroom management to professional reflection and collaboration. Below are some of the key models:

### The Apprentice Model.

The apprentice model is grounded in the idea that student-teachers learn best by working directly with an experienced mentor in a classroom environment. In

this model, student-teachers start by observing their mentor, gradually taking on more responsibility as they gain confidence and experience. This approach fosters skill development through hands-on practice and guided learning. Over time, the student-teacher assumes more significant teaching responsibilities under the supervision of their mentor. Murray, J., & Male, T. (2019).

**Key Features.**

Observation followed by gradually increasing responsibility

Close mentorship and feedback

Focus on skill acquisition in a real classroom setting

**Strengths.**

Provides personalized, context-based learning and support.

Practical Skill Development: The model enables learners to acquire hands-on experience directly applicable to professional contexts, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Personalized Guidance: The one-on-one mentorship provides tailored feedback and support, allowing the apprentice to address specific areas of improvement and enhance individual learning outcomes.

Transfer of Tacit Knowledge: Through close observation and interaction, apprentices gain access to implicit, experience-based knowledge that is difficult to convey through formal instruction.

Incremental Mastery: The progressive allocation of responsibilities fosters confidence and competence, ensuring that learners advance at a pace suited to their abilities.

Contextual Learning: By situating learning within real-world tasks, the model ensures that the knowledge and skills gained are immediately relevant and applicable.

**Weaknesses.**

The effectiveness depends on the mentor teacher's skills.

Dependence on Mentor Quality: The effectiveness of the model is heavily reliant on the expertise, teaching ability, and commitment of the mentor, which can vary significantly.

Resource Intensity: The personalized nature of the model requires significant time and effort from mentors, making it less scalable in large-group or resource-constrained settings.

Limited Standardization: Learning outcomes may vary due to differences in mentor approaches and experiences, potentially leading to inconsistencies in skill acquisition.

Narrow Focus: The model often emphasizes specific tasks or practices, which may limit exposure to broader theoretical knowledge or interdisciplinary perspectives.

Potential for Exploitation: In some cases, apprentices may be overburdened with repetitive or menial tasks without receiving adequate training or opportunities for growth, undermining the educational value of the experience.

## The Co-Teaching Model.

The co-teaching model involves both the student-teacher and the mentor teacher working together in the classroom. They share responsibilities for lesson planning, instruction, and classroom management. The aim is to foster a collaborative environment where both teachers actively contribute to the learning process. This model supports continuous feedback and encourages joint problem-solving in real classroom situations. Zeichner, K. (2018).

### Key Features.

Shared responsibility for lesson planning and teaching

Mutual collaboration and feedback

Focus on teamwork and joint decision-making

## Co-Teaching Approaches.

Several approaches to co-teaching are commonly identified in academic literature:

One Teach, One Observe: One teacher delivers the lesson while the other systematically observes students to gather data for instructional improvement.

One Teach, One Assist: One educator leads the lesson, and the other provides individualized support to students who may require additional guidance.

Parallel Teaching: The class is divided into two groups, with each teacher delivering the same lesson simultaneously to foster small-group interaction.

Station Teaching: Content is divided into distinct segments, and students rotate through stations, each led by one of the teachers.

Alternative Teaching: One teacher provides targeted instruction to a small group, while the other continues teaching the larger group.

Team Teaching: Both educators deliver the lesson together, seamlessly integrating their contributions to create a dynamic instructional experience

**Strengths.**

Provides practical, hands-on experience with immediate support.

Enhanced Differentiation: The presence of multiple educators allows for more effective differentiation and individualized support, meeting the diverse needs of students.

Professional Synergy: Co-teaching fosters professional collaboration, enabling educators to learn from each other's expertise and refine their instructional practices.

Inclusion and Equity: The model promotes inclusive education by providing targeted support without segregating students, fostering a sense of belonging.

Student Engagement: The varied instructional approaches and interactive teaching methods often result in increased student participation and motivation.

Shared Accountability: Co-teachers jointly assume responsibility for student outcomes, leading to a shared commitment to success.

**Weaknesses.**

Requires both teachers to be equally invested in the process.

Planning Demands: Effective implementation requires substantial planning and coordination, which can be time-intensive and challenging.

Role Ambiguity: Without clear delineation of roles, co-teaching may result in confusion, inefficiency, or an uneven distribution of responsibilities.

Dependence on Collaboration: The model relies heavily on the compatibility and communication skills of the co-teachers, which, if lacking, can undermine its effectiveness.

Resource Intensive: Co-teaching often requires additional personnel and institutional support, which may not be feasible in resource-constrained contexts.

Inconsistent Outcomes: Variability in implementation quality and educator expertise can lead to uneven results in student achievement and engagement.

**The Reflective Model.**

In the reflective model, student-teachers focus on self-assessment and reflection after each lesson. They critically evaluate their teaching practices, identify areas for improvement, and adjust their methods accordingly. The reflective process is often guided by regular feedback from mentor teachers and peers. This model emphasizes continuous professional development through iterative learning. Cochran-Smith, M., & Fries, K. (2021)

**Key Features.**

Regular self-assessment and critique

Focus on reflection to improve teaching practices

Feedback-driven improvement cycle

**Stages of the Reflective Process.**

The Reflective Model often involves a cyclical process, exemplified in frameworks such as Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle or Gibbs' Reflective Cycle:

Experience: Engaging in an activity or encountering a situation

Observation and Description: Documenting and describing what occurred, including key events, actions, and outcomes.

Analysis: Examining the experience critically to identify patterns, causes, and implications.

Conclusion: Drawing lessons from the analysis to understand what worked, what did not, and why.

Action Plan: Using insights to inform future actions, behaviors, or strategies, completing the cycle.

**Strengths.**

Encourages lifelong learning and adaptability.

Promotes Critical Thinking: Encourages practitioners to analyze their experiences thoughtfully, leading to deeper insights and better decision-making.

Fosters Professional Growth: Supports continuous learning and development, enabling individuals to refine their skills and adapt to changing contexts.

Bridges Theory and Practice: Facilitates the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application, enhancing professional competence.

Encourages Self-Awareness: Reflection fosters greater understanding of personal strengths, weaknesses, and biases, contributing to personal and professional development.

Enhances Problem-Solving: By analyzing past experiences, individuals develop strategies to address similar challenges more effectively in the future.

**Weaknesses.**

Can be challenging for new teachers to assess their own practices accurately.

Time-Intensive: Effective reflection requires significant time and effort, which may be difficult to allocate in busy professional settings.

Subjectivity: Personal biases and emotional influences can affect the accuracy and depth of reflective analysis.

Variable Depth: The quality of reflection depends on an individual's capacity for critical thinking and willingness to engage in honest self-assessment.

Risk of Overthinking: Excessive reflection may lead to analysis paralysis, where individuals struggle to move forward due to overanalyzing past experiences.

Limited Guidance: Without structured frameworks or support, reflection can become unfocused or superficial, reducing its effectiveness.

**The Inquiry-Based Model.**

The inquiry-based model encourages student-teachers to engage in action research during their teaching practice. Student-teachers are tasked with identifying a problem or question in their classroom, investigating potential solutions, and implementing strategies to address the issue. This approach supports the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Borko, H., Jacobs, J., & Koellner, K. (2018).

**Key Features.**

Focus on research and inquiry

Student-teachers investigate teaching challenges and solutions

Data-driven teaching decisions

**Phases of the Inquiry-Based Model.**

The Inquiry-Based Model typically follows a cyclical process with several stages:

Engagement: Students identify a question, problem, or topic of interest, often prompted by real-world scenarios or teacher-facilitated discussions.

Investigation: Learners gather information, conduct experiments, or analyze data to explore their questions.

Interpretation: Students evaluate and synthesize findings, drawing conclusions and making connections to prior knowledge or concepts.

Communication: Learners present their findings through discussions, reports, or presentations, sharing insights with peers and instructors.

Reflection: Students critically evaluate the inquiry process, assessing the quality of their work and identifying areas for further exploration.

**Strengths.**

Encourages creativity and evidence-based practice.

Promotes Deep Learning: Encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of content by engaging directly with concepts and phenomena.

Enhances Critical Thinking: Fosters analytical and evaluative skills as students question, investigate, and interpret information.

Builds Engagement: By centering on students' interests and questions, the model increases motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Encourages Lifelong Learning: Develops skills such as research, collaboration, and self-directed learning that are transferable beyond the classroom.

Supports Diverse Learners: The model accommodates various learning styles by offering multiple pathways to exploration and understanding.

**Weaknesses.**

Requires time and resources to conduct research.

Time-Intensive: The open-ended nature of inquiry often requires significant time for exploration and investigation, potentially limiting coverage of standardized curricula.

Resource Dependency: Effective implementation relies on access to appropriate materials, technologies, and support, which may not be equally available in all educational contexts.

Challenges for Novice Learners: Students unfamiliar with self-directed learning may struggle to formulate questions, manage investigations, or synthesize findings.

Assessment Difficulties: Measuring outcomes in inquiry-based learning can be challenging due to its focus on process rather than predefined results.

Potential for Knowledge Gaps: Without sufficient guidance, students may overlook key concepts or fail to develop comprehensive understandings.

## The Constructivist Model.

The constructivist model is grounded in the idea that learning occurs through active engagement and problem-solving. In this model, student-teachers are encouraged to create interactive learning environments where students can explore concepts, collaborate, and develop their understanding through hands-on experiences. The role of the student-teacher is to guide and facilitate learning rather than simply deliver content. Lo, M. L., & Tsai, C. C. (2020)

### Key Features.

Active student engagement and problem-solving

Student-teacher facilitates rather than directs learning

Emphasis on collaborative learning

**Theoretical Foundations.**

Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory: Emphasizes stages of cognitive growth and the processes of assimilation and accommodation in constructing knowledge.

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory: Highlights the role of social interaction and cultural tools in learning, introducing concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding.

John Dewey's Pragmatism: Advocates experiential learning and the integration of education with real-life activities to promote practical understanding.

**Strengths.**

Promotes student-centered teaching and fosters deeper learning.

Promotes Deep Learning: Encourages learners to develop a thorough understanding of concepts through active engagement and critical thinking.

Fosters Motivation: Personalized and relevant learning experiences increase student interest and intrinsic motivation.

Supports Lifelong Learning: Emphasizes skills such as inquiry, analysis, and problem-solving, which are transferable beyond the classroom.

Encourages Social and Emotional Growth: Collaborative activities build communication skills, empathy, and a sense of community.

Adapts to Individual Needs: By leveraging prior knowledge, the model supports differentiated learning experiences for diverse students.

**Weaknesses.**

Requires strong classroom management and planning.

Time-Intensive: The emphasis on exploration and personalized learning can be time-consuming, potentially limiting curriculum coverage.

Resource Demands: Effective implementation requires skilled educators, access to materials, and smaller class sizes, which may not be feasible in all contexts.

Assessment Challenges: Measuring learning outcomes can be complex due to the focus on process, understanding, and application rather than rote memorization.

Risk of Misconceptions: Without sufficient guidance, students may construct inaccurate or incomplete understandings of concepts.

Teacher Preparation: Instructors must be well-versed in constructivist strategies and able to facilitate rather than dictate learning, which requires specialized training.

**The Collaborative Model.**

In the collaborative model, student-teachers work alongside other student-teachers, mentor teachers, and school staff to create a learning community. The focus is on joint lesson planning, sharing of teaching strategies, and peer feedback. This model emphasizes community learning and collaboration, both among the teachers and with students. Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2019)

**Key Features.**

Collaborative planning and reflection

Emphasis on teamwork and peer feedback

Sharing of resources and strategies

**Strengths.**

Fosters teamwork and peer learning.

Enhances Critical Thinking: Dialogue and debate foster analytical skills and the ability to consider multiple viewpoints.

Builds Communication Skills: Collaboration requires effective communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution, preparing learners for real-world interactions.

Promotes Inclusivity: Diverse groups encourage the inclusion of varied perspectives and ideas, enriching the learning experience.

Encourages Active Participation: The model shifts learners from passive recipients to active contributors, increasing engagement and motivation.

Prepares for Workforce Collaboration: By simulating real-world teamwork scenarios, the model develops skills applicable in professional environments.

**Weaknesses.**

Requires alignment of teaching styles among participants.

Time-Intensive: Collaborative activities often require significant time for planning, execution, and group discussions, which can reduce instructional time for other content.

Group Dynamics Challenges: Unequal participation, conflicts, or dominance by certain group members can hinder the effectiveness of collaboration.

Assessment Complexity: Evaluating individual contributions in group settings can be challenging, often requiring complex rubrics or peer assessments.

Dependency Risks: Some learners may rely too heavily on group members, leading to unequal skill development and learning outcomes.

Requires Skilled Facilitation: Effective collaboration demands instructors who are adept at managing group dynamics, fostering inclusion, and ensuring meaningful engagement.

## Comparative Analysis of Facilities in Boys' and Girls' School Settings

Here is the comparative analysis of facilities in boys and girls school settings:

### Classroom and Academic Facilities.

Both boys' and girls' schools emphasize academic facilities, but there are some differences in the types of resources available and the teaching approaches adopted. Research indicates that boys' schools tend to focus more on practical, hands-on learning environments that cater to their typically active learning styles. For instance, boys' schools often feature STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) labs, computer science rooms, and vocational workshops designed to foster problem-solving skills and technical expertise (Miller & Johnson, 2020). These schools are also more likely to invest in interactive technologies such as smartboards and tablets to engage students in dynamic learning (Dempsey, 2017).

On the other hand, girls' schools tend to place greater emphasis on both STEM and arts programs, showing a more balanced approach in their academic programs. As reported by Van Houtte (2017), girls' schools often have more comprehensive art rooms, music studios, and performing arts areas in addition to well-equipped STEM labs. These schools also tend to focus more on collaborative and interactive classrooms that foster communication and emotional expression. According to Dempsey (2017), girls' schools, though often equipped with similar technological tools as boys' schools, might also integrate spaces that foster social interaction and group-based learning, with the aim of addressing different learning preferences.

**Sports and Recreational Facilities.**

Sports facilities are an area where boys' and girls' schools exhibit both similarities and differences. Although the two types of schools put an emphasis on the participation in physical education, the variety of sport structures present and sports can be very different from traditional expectations regarding gender roles and school goals. The schools for boys generally contain large sports structures, which often include football, rugby, and cricket fields, and gyms, swimming pools, and basketball courts. Research by Wilson (2018) points out that boys' schools also provide sports programmes, which are more competitive in nature, with emphasis on strength, teamwork, and discipline-all these characteristics align with the traditional masculine ideals.

Girls' schools also are providing different sports options than before with a number of sports coming under their banners such as rugby or cricket. However, these are still sports that have been associated with more feminine aspects, such

as netball, gymnastics, and swimming. Williams and Simms (2019) indicate that girls' schools are more focused on the well-rounded development of girls and allow them to participate in other sports and physical activities as well, such as one-on-one sports and group sports. While girls' schools are broadening their sports programs, boys' schools have a stronger and more competitive infrastructure for traditional team sports.

**Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities.**

There is a stark contrast in the way performing arts facilities are configured in boys' and girls' schools. Traditionally, boys' schools have placed less emphasis on the arts because they have traditionally concentrated on athletics and academic challenge. However, this is changing as schools realize the importance of a balanced curriculum. Research by Van Houtte (2017) shows that some boys' schools are expanding their offerings in music, drama, and the arts, providing specialist facilities like music rooms, drama studios, and art galleries. These schools are slowly integrating creative disciplines into their curricula to encourage self-expression and emotional development, areas that were once sacrificed in favor of more "masculine" subjects.

Girls' schools have, on the other hand, long been known for focusing on the arts and other cultural activities. They often have well-established music rooms, dance studios, and theater spaces that support the development of artistic skills and allow for a wider range of extracurricular activities. Girls' schools tend to integrate arts education into the core curriculum. They offer more frequent and varied opportunities for engagement in performing arts such as in choir, dance, or drama productions (Sadker & Sadker, 2016).

**Technology and Digital Learning Facilities.**

Both boys' and girls' schools invest heavily in technology to prepare students for future careers in an increasingly digital world. In boys' schools, technological facilities are often focused on STEM education, with an emphasis on computer labs, coding rooms, and interactive digital learning tools to enhance technical skills (Miller & Johnson, 2020). These schools often aim to provide students with a solid foundation in digital literacy, particularly in fields like robotics, engineering, and computer programming.

In girls' schools, technology is also encouraged, but the emphasis is often more holistic in the way digital tools are woven throughout all disciplines. According to Van Houtte (2017), girls' schools commonly integrate technology into the humanities, arts, and social sciences in order to enrich learning in these subjects as well. For example, girls' schools may provide specific digital arts programs or utilize technology to facilitate creative writing and collaborative projects in the arts.

**Guidance and Counseling Facilities.**

Boys' and girls' schools are aware of the need to support students' mental health and emotional well-being. However, according to Klein (2019), boys' schools may have a challenge providing adequate counseling services because society does not encourage boys to be emotionally open. Boys may thus be less likely to use counseling services even though they exist. Boys' schools may provide counseling centers that include academic, personal, and behavioral issues, but these services are sometimes underutilized (Klein, 2019).

Girls' schools, however, have more advanced counseling programs that are not only focused on academic support but also on emotional and psychological well-being. According to Sadker and Sadker (2016), most girls' schools offer group counseling sessions, peer support programs, and wellness initiatives targeting the needs of female students in a supportive environment encouraging students to seek help.

## Challenges in girls' school settings

Following are the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in girls' school settings:

### Classroom Dynamic and Students Engagement.

Classroom dynamics in girls' schools often pose unique challenges for pre-service teachers. Research highlights the complexities of managing interpersonal relationships among female students, who may experience heightened social pressures and group affiliations (Van Houtte, 2017). According to Van Houtte (2017), it is likely that the problems above are difficult to handle by pre-service teachers due to inadequate preparation for creating social and emotional well-being. For instance, girls' tendencies towards perfectionism and fear of failure may influence their participation and performance in class, and thus, an empathetic and nuanced approach from educators is required.

### Gender-Specific Educational Needs.

Teaching in girls' schools often involves gender-specific educational needs, especially for subjects where gender stereotypes persist, such as science,

technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). According to Sadker et al. (2016), the societal biases may discourage girls from pursuing STEM-related fields. Therefore, it puts even more responsibility on the part of pre-service teachers who have to challenge stereotypes and provide equitable learning opportunities for girls. Pre-service teachers may not have enough confidence or resources to challenge these stereotypes effectively, which results in gaps in addressing the academic potential of female students (Karakaya & Kurnaz, 2017). Furthermore, teacher training programs may not consistently include gender-responsive teaching practices, which means that the student-teachers are poorly prepared to design inclusive curricula.

**Cultural and Social Expectations.**

According to Sharma and Gupta, in their 2020 discussion, "Preservice teachers have many curtailments, and restrictions they have for issues on reproductive health, gender equity, and the issue of leadership." It implies that such limitations limit a teacher's ability to be adequately equipped to facilitate effective teaching that empowers a woman.

**Professional development support.**

Alam and Khalid (2020) reported that students often face bullying, body image issues, and menstrual management without proper training. All these can lead to feelings of isolation and burnout. The lack of gender-specific teacher training programs makes the situation worse, as pre-service teachers have to depend on their mentors who are not always available or have the necessary expertise (Karakaya & Kurnaz, 2017).

### Role models.

In girls' schools, teachers are often seen as role models, and pre-service teachers may feel pressured to embody qualities that align with societal expectations of female educators (Maher & Ward, 2019). The role-model expectation can restrict a teacher's ability to connect authentically with students, especially when navigating sensitive topics like leadership or self-esteem. This pressure can undermine the teacher's confidence and effectiveness in creating a supportive learning environment.

## Challenges in boys school environments

Following are the challenges that pre-service teachers face in boys school environments:

### Classroom Dynamics and Student Involvement.

Classroom management in boys' schools is often characterized by certain behavioral dynamics, including more frequent physical activity, competition, and peer interactions. It has been reported that boys tend to exhibit more disturbing behaviors, such as aggression and high energy levels, which may make classroom management challenging for pre-service teachers (Dempsey, 2017). According to Dempsey (2017), such dynamics can be more intense in boys' schools where the competitive and dominance-oriented traditional masculine traits are fostered. Pre-service teachers will face challenges in establishing an environment that fosters academic engagement when dealing with high energy levels and impulsive behaviors. Further research postulates that in actively participated participative environments in a class setting, the

teachers' specialty behaviors that regulate active performances usually reflect boys' better classroom engagements and performances (Van Houtte, 2017).

**Gender-Specific Needs in Education.**

Preservice teachers in boys schools may face the challenge of delivering gender-specific educational needs in schools. They generally train such student-school masculine cultures at regular basis as there was fewer ability at involving children who are more interested in activities known as "non-masculine" such as arts, language studies or emotional development (Sadker & Sadker, 2016). Sadker and Sadker (2016) argue that large numbers of pre-service teachers become ineffective in their professional development because they are not challenged to face these gender-based expectations or to make male learners engage in non-traditional fields.

**Social & Cultural Expectations.**

Society holds long histories of male expectations of behavior in boys' schools, mainly traditional and often resulting in further pressure on the prospective teachers to conform to such a model of discipline and behaviour dominated by the prevalent norms of the male world. For instance, society may disallow a situation where emotional expression is minimized, and this restricts boys from discussing issues regarding mental health or relationships in the class (Klein, 2019). As Van Houtte (2017) further states, pre-service teachers might face difficulties in handling topics such as bullying or gender-based violence in contexts that emphasize masculinity and "toughness." Teachers who try to include more inclusive or sensitive topics may receive resistance from students,

parents, or school administrators, which will make their teaching experiences more challenging.

**Poor Professional Support and Mentorship.**

Research by Kriekemans (2020) suggests that new teachers in boys' schools are likely to feel isolated because they might not find mentors who understand the specific dynamics and challenges of teaching boys. Additionally, the lack of a structured mentoring program for addressing the needs of teachers in boys' schools leaves pre-service teachers with insufficient guidance. Lack of mentorship is very bad especially when the pre-service teachers are going to deal with complex social dynamics in boys' schools. For example, they would need to know how to deal with aggressive and hyperactive behavior, promote emotional literacy among boys, and ensure inclusive teaching approaches. Without support, this could lead to burnout and dissatisfaction, affecting retention and effectiveness of the teachers as well (Klein, 2019).

**Role of Masculine Identity in Teaching.**

Research has shown that male students in boys' schools may expect their teachers to embody a "masculine" style of teaching, which can cause stress for pre-service teachers, especially women or those who challenge traditional gender roles (Maher & Ward, 2019). Maher and Ward (2019) have also observed that pre-service teachers, especially women, often find themselves in the dilemma of reconciling their personal teaching philosophy with the expectations of students and the school community.

## Comparative Analysis of Challenges Faced by Pre-Service Teachers in Boys' and Girls' School Settings

Here is a comparative analysis of challenges faced by Pre-Service Teachers in boys' and girls' school settings:

### Classroom Management Challenges.

**Boys' Schools:** Pre-service teachers face challenges in handling classroom dynamics in boys' schools since most boys are more active and sometimes noisy. Studies indicate that boys are more likely to exhibit physical and competitive classroom behaviors, which may become difficult for pre-service teachers to handle effectively (Klein, 2019). Pre-service teachers may find it challenging balancing a need to maintain discipline with the need to create an interesting and participatory learning environment that matches boys' energy levels and learning styles.

**Girls' Schools**: Challenges with classroom management of girls' schools are often marked by issues involving social dynamics and emotions. Girls commonly make intimate circles of peers, and their pre-service teachers face tough moments with regards to incidents of exclusion, gossiping, and peer pressure (Van Houtte, 2017). The dynamics produce an understated but difficult scenario in which classroom management would need pre-service teachers to employ sensitive and integrative practice.

### Pedagogical Approaches and Gender-Specific Needs.

**Boys' Schools:** Pre-service teachers in boys' schools generally find it difficult to change their teaching style to suit the active and hands-on mode of learning

that boys exhibit. Miller and Johnson, (2020) posits that boys are most likely to perform well if they are exposed to a practical, experiential way of learning. Pre-service teachers will find it hard to develop lessons that attract students while maintaining the curriculum requirements. Third, for instance, societal norms many times force teachers to reflect certain traditional masculine values, with which progressive teaching skills seem to conflict.

**Girls' Schools:** In girls' school training institutes it is common that preservice teachers struggle to inspire young girls to participate and give confidents in subjects where males lead the class, especially at STEM subjects. According to research, girls are stereotyped, and such stereotypes tend to erode their confidence in such areas. Thus, pre-service teachers will have to strive to break these stereotypes and provide an encouraging learning environment (Sadker & Sadker, 2016). Furthermore, girls may require a more interactive and discussion-based learning style, which requires pre-service teachers to employ more interactive and inclusive teaching methods.

**Behavior Management and Student Engagement.**

**Boys' Schools:** The management of boys' behavior is one of the biggest challenges for pre-service teachers in boys' schools. Boys are more likely to be disruptive or defiant, partly because they require physical activity and competitive outlets (Klein, 2019). Pre-service teachers face difficulties in keeping boys who are not interested in regular academic subjects or who require more physical movement and kinesthetic learning opportunities.

**Girls' Schools**: In girl school-based teaching setting behavior issues would perhaps emerge and get somewhat manifest while can demand all over

challenges on your behaviors like girls would often express that are not satisfied by showing reluctance or disengagement even from class activities (Van Houtte, 2017). Pre service teachers would be challenged for identifying such subtler acts of disengagement specifically if they have no earlier practices in reading social and emotional cues.

**Societal Expectations and Gender Roles.**

**Boys' Schools:** Masculinity expectations in society may make it challenging for pre-service teachers in boys' schools. Teachers are expected to reinforce traditional male roles, which may be at odds with the promotion of emotional intelligence and inclusivity in the classroom (Klein, 2019). The pre-service teacher may face a challenge in balancing these expectations with the need to create a supportive and progressive learning environment.

**Girls' Schools:** Societal expectations in girls' schools are often placed on the academic excellence and social conformity, which puts extra pressure on the pre-service teachers. Sadker and Sadker (2016) also report that the expectations for emotional support and pastoral care may be more demanding in girls' schools, where pre-service teachers are expected to teach not only academics but also attend to the emotional needs of the students. Managing this double burden is particularly stressful, especially for inexperienced teachers.

**Institutional Support and Mentorship.**

**Boys' Schools:** Pre-service teachers often indicate difficulties in boys' schools that are attributed to inadequate mentorship and support. Institutions may focus more on the school's culture, including high performance and discipline, which

they leave pre-service teachers to learn by themselves since it's up to them to be well equipped in their professional activities (Kriekemans, 2020). Moreover, a highly competitive environment in boys' schools can be extremely stressing.

**Girls' Schools**: In girls' schools, pre-service teachers may face challenges in finding mentorship that addresses the unique needs of female students. Although girls' schools often have a more collaborative culture, pre-service teachers may still face a lack of formalized support structures, especially concerning issues such as body image, mental health, and academic pressure (Klein, 2019). Moreover, pre-service teachers may face problems in balancing traditional expectations of nurturing roles with professional boundaries.

**Gender-Specific Problems Faced by Pre-Service Teachers.**

The following are the Gender-Specific Problems Faced by Pre-Service Teachers:

**Stereotypes and Gender Bias.**

Female pre-service teachers often experience stereotypes that link women with mothering and caring roles. This can add more emotional labor to them. As Allen (2016) states, female teachers are sometimes expected to perform pastoral tasks, such as managing the emotional lives of students, even if they are not trained or do not want to. This can cause burnout and a feeling of undervalued professionals. In addition, female teachers in male-dominated fields like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) have problems with the establishment of authority and credibility (Sadker & Zittleman, 2016).

Male pre-service teachers are also subjected to stereotypes, with questions being raised regarding their suitability to teach the little ones or "feminine subjects" such as early childhood education or language arts. The study by Smith (2017) indicated that such male teachers face scrutiny and suspicion in teaching, most especially with regard to younger children. These stereotypes increase feelings of isolation and do not encourage men to pursue an education career.

**Gendered Expectations in Classroom Management.**

Female preservice teachers tend to prefer teaching methods characterized as "soft," less controlling, and not confrontational; they will more often experience disruption, as children will try the teachers out for being perceived as "soft" (Allen, 2016). Female teachers are also prone to experiencing gendered critique from their students, parents, and colleagues, thus complicating their professional growth.

Male pre-service teachers are often expected to be authoritative and maintain strict discipline in the classroom. On one hand, this expectation often works for them, sometimes putting pressure on them to adopt an authoritarian management approach that conflicts with the dominant, contemporary, student-centred approaches to pedagogies. Martino and Rezai-Rashti in 2019 suggested that males would struggle with juggling expectations about their masculinity within a society against the collaborative, empathetic teacher education program teaching strategies.

**Workplace Harassment and Safety Concerns.**

Female pre-service teachers are more vulnerable to harassment in the workplace, both from colleagues and students. Sexual harassment and micro-aggressions based on gender can undermine their confidence and sense of safety, mostly in male-dominated school settings (McDonald, 2018). Such harassment may create a hostile environment that may hinder female pre-service teachers from focusing more on professional growth.

Male pre-service teachers also face safety concerns, though these are often related to perceptions of vulnerability when navigating accusations of misconduct. Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2019) point out that male teachers may avoid some types of interactions with students, like one-on-one meetings, for fear of false accusations. Such a dynamic may impede their ability to form relationships with students and develop practices that are most effective for teaching.

**Gender and Opportunities for Professional Development.**

Research indicates that female pre-service teachers are often channeled into roles and subjects that are in line with traditional gender roles, thus avoiding them from being exposed to a wide range of teaching opportunities. This may discourage them from advancing their career and perpetuate occupational segregation in education (Allen, 2016). Women, for example, tend to be discouraged from teaching positions in leadership roles or subjects like sports education, dominated by male teachers.

Male preservice teachers can access professional development in leadership positions better due to societal expectations often holding that men belong behind the reins and in a leadership role. However, these benefits also come

with responsibilities such as meeting greater standards for performance in the profession that do not align well with career goals or the pedagogy a male preservice teacher hopes to embody (Smith, 2017).

**Intersectionality and Gendered Challenges.**

The concept of intersectionality has significant influence on the experiences of pre-service teachers. Other challenges include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation, which often add up to gendered challenges. For instance, female teachers from a minority group may suffer dual discrimination because of their gender and ethnicity, while male teachers from a marginalized community are highly scrutinized and biased against (Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2019).

# METHODOLOGY

## Research design

This study involves comparative quantitative design to observe the challenges which pre-service teachers face while on their practicum in boys school settings versus girls school settings. A structured questionnaire is used to gather data from the participants, regarding challenges that they faced while on their practicum.

## Participants

The participants comprise 88 pre-service teachers (30 placed in girls and 57 placed in boys' school settings) enrolled in B. Ed (Hons) at University of Education who completed their practicum either in boys or girls school settings.

## Setting and Context

This study was conducted across 2 single-gender school, with equal representation from boys and girls school. These school were located in CDGL Girls High School Green Town Lahore and Govt. High School Bagariyan Lahore.

**Table1**

**Population distribution.**

| Schools | Female Pre-Service Teachers | Male Pre-Service Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| Girls | 30 | 0 |
| Boys | 39 | 19 |

**Sampling method**

Participant were selected through purposive sampling with a proportional sampling strategy to ensure diversity in teaching experiences. Sample size is determined by using the formula:

$$ni = \left(\frac{Ni}{N}\right) \times n$$

**Female pre-service teachers in girls' school**

$$= \left(\frac{30}{88}\right) \times 30$$

$= 0.3409 \times 30$

$=10.22 \approx 10$

**Male pre-service teachers in girls' school**

$$= \left(\frac{0}{88}\right) \times 30$$

$= 0 \times 30$

$=0$

**Female pre-service teachers in boys' school**

$$= \left(\frac{39}{88}\right) \times 30$$

$= 0.4431 \times 30$

$=13.295 \approx 13$

**Male pre-service teachers in boys' school**

$$= \left(\frac{19}{88}\right) \times 30$$

$$= 0.2159 \times 30$$

$$=6.477 \approx 7$$

**Sample Size**

The sample consist of 30 pre-service teachers from the population of 88 Pre-Service teachers enrolled in practicum.

**Table 2**

**Sample distribution.**

| Schools | Female Pre-Service Teachers | Male Pre-Service Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| Girls | 10 | 0 |
| Boys | 13 | 7 |

**Data Collection Method**

This data is collected through structured questionnaire design specifically for this study. This questionnaire is filled by participant during their practicum to capture their experiences and reflections.

**Instrumentation**

A structured questionnaire with 17 open-ended, Likert Scale question (1= Strongly Agree to 5= Strongly Disagree), comprises of 6 sections:

**Section 1**: Demographic information (e.g. age, gender, school type)

**Section 2:** Closed-ended Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) on Classroom Management

**Section 3:** Closed-ended Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) on Gender-Specific Expectations

**Section 4**: Closed-ended Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) on Activities

**Section 5:** Closed-ended Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) on Collaboration

**Section 6:** Closed-ended Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) on Perception of Teaching Practice.

## Validation

This questionnaire was reviewed by our supervisor from University of Education and pretested on a small group consisting of 4 participants. Amendments were made according to the instructions provided by our supervisor.

## Administration

An online survey is conducted for data administration. Participants are provided with google form to ensure their responses and experiences.

## Data Analysis

Qualitative data is analyzed using SPSS software, using descriptive analysis.

Question no.1: What are the key challenges faced by pre service teachers during teaching Practicum? Is analyzed by computing frequencies and percentages.

Question no. 2: How do these challenges vary by school gender? Is analyzed by comparing frequencies and percentages between male and female pre-service teachers.

## Ethical Consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from University of Education. All the participants provided their consent and agreed to take part in the study by volunteering to participate. Responses were anonymized for confidentiality, and the respondents were assured that the responses were going to be used for research purposes only.

## Limitations

One problem that emerges is response bias through self-reported data. Another limitation of using just a single questionnaire is that there is a lesser understanding compared with the mixed-methods approach.

# Data Analysis

**Table 3**

***Pre-Service Teachers Age, Gender And School Gender***

| Demographic information | | Female | | Male | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % |
| Age | <20 | 4 | 17.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | 20-25 | 19 | 82.6 | 7 | 100 |
| School Gender | Boys School | 13 | 56.5 | 7 | 100 |
| | Girls School | 10 | 43.5 | 0 | 0.0 |

Table 3 outline the demographic information (age, gender and school gender) of the pre-service teachers. The demographic characteristics of the participants revealed interesting gender disparities in terms of age and type of school. 82.6% of the female participants were under twenty years: among those above twenty, 17.4% were aged between 20 to 25. Conversely, all the male participants were between 20 to 25 years old. Regarding the type of school, which acted as a place for the practicum to be conducted, 43.5% of the female participants were sent to girls' schools, and the rest were sent to boys' schools. Whereas all the male participants were assigned to boys' schools for their practicum, there was no male participant in girls' schools.

**Table 4**

***Challenges Faced By Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Classroom Management***

| Statements | | Gender | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | N | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | N | % |
| 1. | You could effectively maintain discipline in your classroom. | Female | 5 | 21.70 | 12 | 52.20 | 4 | 17.40 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | Male | 3 | 42.90 | 3 | 42.90 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 14.30 |
| 2. | You felt confident in managing students classroom behavior during your teaching practice. | Female | 7 | 30.40 | 14 | 60.90 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | Male | 5 | 71.40 | 1 | 14.30 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 14.30 |
| 3. | It was simple to maintain and follow classroom rules. | Female | 4 | 17.40 | 9 | 39.10 | 9 | 39.10 | 1 | 4.30 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | Male | 2 | 28.60 | 2 | 28.60 | 3 | 42.90 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 4 outline the responses related to challenges faced by Pre-Service teachers regarding classroom management during their teaching practice in girls vs. boys school settings. Results show that female preservice teachers had overall positive perceptions about their abilities to manage the classroom. Only 73.9% perceived themselves able to maintain discipline well, 91.3% were good managers of the students' behavior, and 56.5% found it easy to maintain and follow classroom rules. A larger proportion expressed a neutral position regarding whether or not classroom rules were easy to maintain (39.1%). By contrast, male preservice teachers revealed higher levels of confidence. More than 71.4% agreed that they could manage students' behavior, and maintain discipline most of them; while 28.6% had no doubts that classroom rules could be followed with ease. Males felt, however, more neutral about the ease of maintaining rules (42.9%). There were very few disagreements or strong disagreements for all three items across genders.

**Table 5**

***Challenges Faced By Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Gender-Specific Expectations***

| | Statements | Gender | N.A | | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 1. | Do you think parents were concerned when a teacher from opposite gender was teaching in the class. | Female | 2 | 8.70 | 1 | 4.30 | 10 | 43.50 | 2 | 8.70 | 6 | 26.10 | 2 | 8.70 |
| | | Male | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 | 4 | 57.10 | 3 | 42.90 | 6 | 26.10 | 2 | 8.70 |
| 2. | You could easily convey your thought and insights to the students of opposite gender. | Female | 1 | 4.30 | 5 | 21.70 | 12 | 52.20 | 3 | 13.00 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | | Male | 0 | 0.00 | 2 | 28.60 | 1 | 14.30 | 4 | 57.10 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3. | You believe male and female pre-service teachers faced different challenges during their teaching practice. | Female | 0 | 0.00 | 4 | 17.40 | 9 | 39.10 | 4 | 17.40 | 0 | 0.00 | 6 | 26.10 |
| | | Male | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 14.30 | 1 | 14.30 | 4 | 57.10 | 1 | 14.30 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 5 outline the responses related to challenges faced by Pre-Service teachers regarding gender-specific expectations during their teaching practice in girls vs. boys school settings. The findings show that female preservice teachers perceive the challenges of the teaching practicum differently from their male counterparts. Female respondents' express agreement with feelings towards conveying thoughts and insights to students of the opposite gender, compared to male respondents (73.9%). Attitudes towards whether male and female preservice teachers face different challenges were as follows: 56.5% of females agreed, while males were much less certain, average 17.4%

neutral responses, and 26.1% disagreed strongly. For males, 57.1% had a neutral opinion, whereas 28.6% agreed and only 14.3% disagreed. These results suggest that female preservice teachers tend to perceive more distinct gender-specific challenges compared to their male counterparts, who often reported neutral perspectives.

**Table 6**

***Challenges Faced By Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Activities***

| Statements | Gender | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 1. It was easier for you to conduct activities in your classroom. | Female | 3 | 13.00 | 10 | 43.50 | 5 | 21.70 | 4 | 17.40 | 1 | 14.30 |
| | Male | 1 | 14.30 | 3 | 42.90 | 3 | 42.90 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2. It was easier for you to engage students in those activities. | Female | 2 | 8.70 | 10 | 43.50 | 9 | 39.10 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 3 | 42.90 | 2 | 28.60 | 1 | 14.30 | 1 | 14.30 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 6 outline the responses related to challenges faced by Pre-Service teachers regarding activities during their teaching practice in girls vs. boys school settings. The results indicate gender-based differences in the ease of conducting and engaging students in classroom activities during the teaching practicum. Regarding the ease of conducting activities, 56.5% of female preservice teachers agreed or strongly agreed, 21.7% were neutral, and 17.4% disagreed. Among male preservice teachers, 57.2% agreed or strongly agreed, and 42.9% remained neutral, with no disagreement reported. In terms of engaging students in activities, 52.2% of female participants agreed or strongly agreed, while 39.1% were neutral, and 8.7% disagreed. Male preservice teachers exhibited greater confidence in this area, with 71.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 14.3% remaining neutral, and 14.3% disagreeing. These findings suggest that male preservice teachers perceive slightly greater ease in engaging students, while

females report more varied experiences, with some indicating challenges in both conducting and engaging students in activities.

**Table 7**

***Challenges Faced By Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Collaboration***

| Statements | Gender | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. You have supervisory support during teaching practice. | Female | 5 | 21.70 | 13 | 56.50 | 4 | 17.40 | 1 | 4.30 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 4 | 57.10 | 2 | 28.60 | 1 | 14.30 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2. You have a good relationship with the cooperating teacher. | Female | 7 | 30.40 | 8 | 34.80 | 6 | 26.10 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 3 | 42.90 | 2 | 28.60 | 2 | 28.60 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3. You consulted your mentor when you faced difficulties during your teaching practice. | Female | 3 | 13.00 | 13 | 56.50 | 6 | 26.10 | 1 | 4.30 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 0 | 0.00 | 4 | 57.10 | 1 | 14.30 | 2 | 28.60 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 7 outline the responses related to challenges faced by Pre-Service teachers regarding collaboration during their teaching practice in girls vs. boys school settings. The findings suggest that generally, preservice teachers had perceived strong support during the teaching practicum with variation in gender. Concerning supervisory support, the 78.2% of female respondents and the 85.7% of male respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while showing a minimal neutral or disagreeing response. Of females and males who responded, 65.2% of females and 71.5% of males reported positive experiences regarding cooperating teachers, while 26.1% of females and 28.6% of males reported to be neutral, and none reported disagreement among the males. When asked about their agreement or disagreement about seeking mentors during difficulties, 69.5% of females agreed or strongly agreed compared to 57.1% of males, and 26.1% of females and 14.3% of males were neutral. Notably, only 28.6% of males disagreed with seeking mentors, while only 4.3% of females reported such. This result implies

that, on average, male and female preservice teachers had friendly environments where females rely more on mentorship and males report slightly stronger relationships with cooperating teachers.

**Table 8**

***Challenges Faced By Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Perception Of Teaching Practice***

| Statements | Gender | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 1. You are happy with the way your teaching practice is organized. | Female | 4 | 17.40 | 12 | 52.20 | 4 | 17.40 | 3 | 13.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 2 | 28.60 | 4 | 57.10 | 1 | 14.30 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2. The teaching practice is helping you in developing your teaching skills. | Female | 8 | 34.80 | 13 | 56.50 | 2 | 8.70 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | Male | 5 | 71.40 | 2 | 28.60 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 8 summarizes answers related to challenges faced by pre-service teachers in terms of perceived teaching practice during their practice teaching at girls' as opposed to boys' school settings. The findings seem to be that both the male and female preservice teachers were content with their practice teaching generally, though with slight gender difference. As for the arrangement of the teaching practice, 69.6% of the female participants strongly agreed or agreed, as opposed to 85.7% of male participants. On the other hand, only a small proportion of female participants (13.0%) were dissatisfied. In terms of skills development in teaching, 91.3% females and 100% of males agreed or strongly agreed and no one disagreed. These results suggest that although both sexes were positive towards both aspects of the practicum, namely, the organization and skill development, preservice male teachers were even more satisfied with both dimensions.

# Findings, Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum in boys' and girls' school settings. This investigation aimed to identify and compare these challenges, with a particular focus on key areas such as classroom management, gender-specific expectations, classroom activities, collaboration with mentors and supervisors, and the overall perceptions of the teaching practicum experience.

## Findings

The results showed significant differences between genders in the learning experiences of preservice teachers in a boys' school and girls' school setting:

- Most females were under the age of 20, with a very strong likelihood of being placed in either a boys' or girls' school. Conversely, all males were aged between 20 and 25 and placed in a boys' school for their practicum.
- In general, female preservice teachers reported positive perceptions regarding their ability to manage a class, with 80% claiming confidence to handle behavior and enforce discipline; however, views were more ambivalent on the ease of upholding regulations within the classroom. Males also reported high levels of confidence regarding this aspect of teaching but were more likely to give ambivalent responses to the toughness of maintaining rules.
- The gender-biased issues were parental concerns for the opposite gender of the teachers and whether they face different challenges as males or females. For males, mostly neutral or less pronounced perceptions of challenges were recalled.

- Classroom activities were either confident or very confident for both males and females, with males noting more ease in conducting class.
- Both groups felt that the supervisory support was very strong; however, reliance on mentorship was higher among females and among males with cooperating teachers.
- Finally, the organization and what it offers in terms of skill development were of content to preservice teachers of either gender, with the males reporting a marginally higher level of satisfaction.
- The findings indicate that though preservice teachers of either gender were supportive, and generally satisfied with the practicum, differences were observed based on gender regarding perceptions of classroom management, gender-specific expectations, and collaboration.

**Discussion**

Following are the discussions:

The findings of this research study showed that classroom management in boys' schools was very different from girls' schools. Preservice teachers who were teaching in boys' schools found it more challenging to handle disruptive behavior as many students were energetic, restless, and physically interactive. This is in line with the literature, which points out that boys' classrooms require more active and physical approaches to behavior management (Smith & Williams, 2018). Teachers in these settings often have to spend time on discipline and attention, which can be at the expense of instructional time (Thompson, 2017).

On the other hand, in girls' school classrooms, management was also associated with problems of in-school emotional disengagement and subtle social interaction. Practicing teachers reported that emotional withdrawal or passive resistance manifesting as gossip or exclusion had occurred among the students themselves. The literature on teaching in girls' schools supports this observation, which calls for teachers to handle social and emotional problems alongside maintaining academic focus (Jones, 2020). The current study validates these challenges, as participants have emphasized the need for understanding and navigating the emotional and relational aspects of classroom management in girls' schools (Klein & Mills, 2021).

Gender-specific expectations strain preservice teachers differently in boys' schools and girls' schools. In the boys' schools, preservice teachers had to conform to typical masculine norms, such as being tough, disciplined, and to control. This can be seen in the literature, where the expectation of society would be that males must be involved in teaching such masculine values, particularly on behavior management (Richards, 2021). Preservice teachers in boys' schools in this study reported that their roles were often seen as disciplinary, which sometimes overshadowed other aspects of teaching.

Conversely, preservice teachers were to concentrate on the emotional support of female students besides ensuring their students have high confidence in traditionally male-dominated subjects like mathematics and science. The literature of the scholarly world postulates that teachers in girl schools are to take the role of emotional nurturing where the problems of low self-esteem or low confidence among female students are to be solved (Miller & Johnson, 2022). This was supported in the present study, which showed that preservice

teachers added a responsibility toward countering societal gender stereotypes while developing an empowering learning environment for their female students as noted by Green and Thompson, 2020.

The study found significant differences in the types of activities preservice teachers used and the challenges they faced when implementing them in boys' versus girls' schools. Often, the activities had to be more physically engaging and competitive to keep the boys' attention. Preservice teachers frequently used hands-on activities, team-based activities, and games, which is in line with the literature that points out that boys' classrooms would be better off with more energetic, interactive teaching approaches (Smith, 2019). The present study supported these findings as the participants pointed out that such activities were needed to keep the students engaged and to reduce misbehavior.

Girls' schools were more collaborative and emotionally supportive. In these contexts, preservice teachers reported that they applied group work and discussions to build deeper engagement and reflection. The literature indicates that the classrooms of girls need more activities that stimulate collaboration, critical thinking, and emotional expression (Williams & Harris, 2020). Such findings were supported by this study, as preservice teachers illustrated that activities within girls' schools often involved the cultivation of social-emotional development and teamwork, which at times required extra preparation and support.

Collaboration had become one of the most critical concerns in both boys' schools and girls' schools; however, the nature of collaboration varied between the two settings. In boys' schools, preservice teachers had a hard time

introducing collaboration since the students would be extremely competitive, sometimes stopping group work and cooperative learning. Literature review suggests that a more individualistic culture of the boys' classrooms may have undermined collaborative activities (Adams & Barker, 2018). The research reflected that problem. During the participants' discussions, they agreed that group work often ended up becoming competitive, hence hard to sustain co-operation within the students.

In the girls' schools, generally, co-operative work is easier to develop because most of the students were very willing to do group work. However, the literature also raises the fact that cliques and social dynamics at girls' schools work against effective collaborative work (Martin & Stewart, 2020). Similar concerns were found in this study where preservice teachers indicated that while collaboration was encouraged, all students would not necessarily participate equitably in group work, primarily because social circles affect their engagement.

Lastly, the nature of teaching practice was impacted by the specific challenges that exist in boys' compared to girls' schools. Student teachers in boys' schools frequently viewed their teaching practice as being behavior-managed and many of the respondents reported that maintaining classroom control was their key concern. There is evidence to support that male teachers experience difficulty reconciling behavioral management with instructional delivery in boys' classrooms (Thompson, 2017). The current study was one with these challenges as the preservice teachers in boys' schools indicated that they spent much time addressing interruptions rather than doing the curriculum.

The preservice teachers in girls' schools found the role to be very emotionally labor-intensive. They felt their role was not only teaching but rather assisting the students emotionally by creating confidence and helping solve challenges related to gender. The literature supports this view, indicating that teaching in girls' schools requires a more nurturing and supportive approach and especially in addressing the needs of students emotionally and socially (Klein & Mills, 2021). This study confirmed that the preservice teachers in the girls' schools often viewed their practice through a lens of emotional and relational support at times overshadowing their responsibilities for academics.

In conclusion, the findings of this study align with other literature that has already been put forth in regard to the challenges preservice teachers face in boys' and girls' schools but also bring out some crucial differences between the two. Classroom management, gender-specific expectations, activity implementation, collaboration, and perceptions of teaching practice all differed in significant ways between the two types of schools. In order to note these differences, special trainings and support for the pre-service teachers are inevitable considering the importance of taking all the challenges that lie amidst both boys' school as well as girls' schools. Long-term changes related to the professional developments along with the teaching techniques applied can be found through subsequent future research.

**Recommendation**

Mentorship for teacher preparation programs should be sensitive to the gender-specific challenges pre-service teachers face. For example, male pre-service teachers would benefit from mentorship in emotional intelligence and collaboration skills, while female pre-service teachers may benefit from support

in classroom management and overcoming gendered expectations of emotional nurturing (Richards, 2021).

Workshops and training should be included in the preparation program for teachers so that the preservice teachers are better prepared to understand and handle the societal gender expectations in single-gender schools. These sessions should focus on the development of inclusive teaching practices and reduction of pressure on teachers to follow the rigid gender norms (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

### For Future Research.

The future research should be in such a way that includes larger samples from other geographical areas, including urban as well as rural, that increase the generalization potential.

For personal experiences of the preservice teachers, interviews and focus groups would add valuable information for the present challenges and perceptions of boys' and girls' teachers, to be incorporated by further research.

## Limitations of the Study

This study had a number of limitations: for example, the number of participants was small; a large portion of the information is based on self-reported response sources, which may incur certain biases. The findings obtained are specific to just a semester and a particular small number of schools, one city, and therefore limited extrapolation to a pre-service teacher population. Such potential limitations of this present research should be addressed using much larger

samples and utilizing the use of multiple modes for data collection in any such future research.

## Final Summary

It is against this background that training programs for pre-service teachers should address the gendered challenges. Results of this research indicate that both boys and girls' schools' settings represent unique difficulties which pre-service teachers face during their educational process, including gendered expectations, specific classroom management needs, and perceptions regarding practice teaching. It is these recommendations that may be adapted in teacher preparation programs, thereby helping trainees have the confidence to be good teachers in varied and also gender-segregated educational contexts.

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# Appendix

## Questionnaire

Challenges Faced by pre-service teachers during practicum in Boys vs. Girls school settings.

### *Introduction*

This questionnaire aims to understand different challenges faced by the pre-service teachers during practicum in boys vs. girls' school settings. Your responses provide valuable insight about your perspective. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

### *Instruction*

Kindly fill this questionnaire with your experience during practicum. Choose the options 1 is for strongly agree, 2 is for agree, 3 is for neutral, 4 is for disagree and 5 is for strongly disagree. This questionnaire will take _____ mints of yours.

### *Personal information*

What is your name? _____

What is your age? ☐ >20 ☐ 20-25 ☐ 5-30 ☐ 0

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

In which type of school you complete your teaching practice?

☐ Girls school ☐ Boys school ☐ Co-ed school

### *Classroom management*

| Statements | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You could effectively maintain discipline in your classroom. | | | | | |
| You felt confident in managing students classroom behavior during your teaching practice. | | | | | |
| It was simple to maintain and follow classroom rules. | | | | | |

***Gender-specific expectations***

| Statement | N.A | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do you think parents were concerned when a teacher from opposite gender was teaching in the class. | | | | | | |
| You could easily convey your thought and insights to the students of opposite gender. | | | | | | |
| You believe male and female pre-service teachers faced different challenges during their teaching practice. | | | | | | |

***Activities***

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It was easier for you to conduct activities in your classroom. | | | | | |
| It was easier for you to engage students in those activities. | | | | | |

***Collaboration***

| **Statement** | **Strongly agree** | **Agree** | **Neutral** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You have supervisory support during teaching practice | | | | | |
| You have a good relationship with the cooperating teacher | | | | | |
| You consulted your mentor when you faced difficulties during your teaching practice. | | | | | |

***Perception of teaching practice***

| **Statement** | **Strongly agree** | **Agree** | **Neutral** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You are happy with the way your teaching practice is organized. | | | | | |
| The teaching practice is helping you in developing your teaching skills. | | | | | |